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**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**JANUARY 2011**

**Presidential Address**



As I was writing this column from Sydney, Australia, just prior to Thanksgiving, I began to reflect on the many things for which I am grateful. With that in mind, I want to thank the State Board mentors Tony Glasser, O.D. and David Reed, O.D., without whose example and guidance I would not have been as effective a leader for our profession. Thanks is also given to my wonderful hard-working Board: Jo Anne Brilliant, O.D., Phyllis Strickland, O.D., Frederick Walsh, Ph.D., Kisha Fields Matthews, Stephen Kwan O.D., and staff Delia Turano Schadt, AAG, Board Counsel, and Kecia Dunham, Licensing Coordinator. A most sincere thanks goes to a very special person, our Board Administrator, Patricia Bennett, MSW, better known as Pat. You will never know a more energetic, professional, efficient, sincere, caring, tireless worker than Pat. I have learned everything about Board operations from her.

The Board's most recent accomplishment has been the passing of its Sunset Bill, SB 145. The Board went through a preliminary review by the Department of Legislative Services in 2009 and based on their findings, the Board was waived from a full review and extended until 2023. Other areas the Board has on its agenda include the development of sanctioning guidelines and the drafting of regulations to standardize the sanctions imposed in the disciplinary process.

As mentioned by our previous Board President, David Reed, O.D. please be reminded that the general session meetings are open to the public, and anyone who wishes to attend is welcome. The Board appreciates new ideas on issues that affect the Board, its licensees and the profession of Optometry. The Board continually strives to improve on the process so long as it is within the statute and regulations to do so. The Board can review and amend its "regulations", but it does not have the authority to change the statute. This is the legislative process over which the Board has no authority. The Board cannot change the law and encourages all licensees to work with the MOA to address legislative issues, such as licensing, reciprocity and therapeutics. Please contact the MOA if you have any issues that you would like addressed.

Thank you to all for your hard work and commitment to the profession of Optometry and your efforts to make Maryland a better place. The entire Board joins me in extending best wishes for a happy, healthy and safe New Year.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Azman, O.D.

# Welcome New Licensees

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There are 879 optometrists with active license status and 309 with inactive licensure status. The Board welcomes the following licensees to the state.

Amir Abyaneh, O.D.

Alina Balasa, O.D.

Wendy Batista, O.D.

Christine Beck, O.D.

Burt J. Mazia, O.D.

Meghan Cook, O.D.

Sylvia Briceno, O.D.

Anupreet Chawla, O.D.

Meredith Cohen, O.D.

Katy Conway, O.D.

Rosa DeStrange, O.D.

Aesha Dharia, O.D.

Nathan Frank, O.D.

Andrew Ganesh, O.D.

Tanner Gates, O.D.

Lila Goodwin, O.D.

Ricky Gurprasad, O.D.

Heather Harless, O.D.

Erin Latter, O.D.

Jane Lee, O.D.

Michael Leung, O.D.

Kelli McCartney, O.D.

Sanbrita Mondal, O.D.

Ahmad Morshedi, O.D.

Osvaldo Negron, O.D.

Allyssa Nguyen, O.D.

Aileen Nguyen, O.D.

Hallie Nguyen, O.D.

Ajibola Ogunnusi, O.D.

Dhruvi Patel, O.D.

Mallika Patel, O.D.

Molly Quinn, O.D.

Melanie Rennie, O.D.

Nadia Rutayisire, O.D.

Mahsa Salehi, O.D.

Adam Schmidt, O.D.

Sandra Segerson, O.D.

Minu Shah, O.D.

Mahsa Skekari, O.D.

Hugh Steer, O.D.

Ochechi Ukegbu, O.D.

Meagan Steg, O.D.

Rana Taji, O.D.

Elnaz Taslim-Sara, O.D.

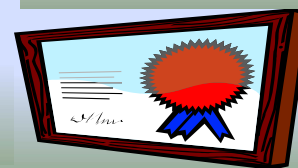
Humberto Villafana, O.D.

Ashley Westbrook, O.D.

Gene Wong, O.D.

Thanh Yang, O.D.

Naghme Zaher, O.D.



## Board Meetings

The Regular Session of Board meetings is open to the public and held at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215 in room #105, at 9:30 a.m. The schedule for 2011 is as follows:

January 26, 2011

March 23, 2011

May 25, 2011

July 27, 2011

September 28, 2011

November 16, 2011

## Board Members

**Thomas Azman, O.D., President**

Rehabilitation Committee

Term Expiration 5/31/2012

**Phyllis M. Strickland, O.D., Treasurer**

ARBO Liaison

Term Expiration 5/31/2012

**Kisha Fields Matthews, Secretary**

Consumer Member

Legislative Liaison

Term Expiration 5/31/2012

**Jo Anne Brilliant, O.D., Board Member**

Chair, Quality Enhancement & Improvement Committee

Continuing Education Committee

Term Expiration 5/31/2011

**Stephen D. Kwan, O.D., Board Member**

Continuing Education Committee

Credentialing Committee

Legislative Liaison

Term Expiration 5/31/2013

**Frederick J. Walsh, Ph.D., Consumer Member**

Term Expiration 5/31/2014

Optometrist Member - Vacancy

## Farewell

Dr. David D. Reed, O.D. ended his second 4 year term as a member of the Board on May 31, 2010. Dr. Reed had served an additional period of time as he completed the term of his predecessor. In total, Dr. Reed served for 10 years. At a farewell luncheon in his honor, Board members and staff honored Dr. Reed for his contributions to the Board, the optometric professional community at large and the citizens of the state. He was presented with certificates from the Secretary of the Department and the Governor. Dr. Reed also received the "Board Plaque", a specially designed plaque presented to outgoing Board members.

Dr. Reed served as member and Chair of the Board's Quality Assurance Committee, QEI, for several years and led the Board as President for 4 years. The Board extends its best wishes to Dr. Reed as he continues to serve the citizens of Maryland and the optometric community at large.



**CE CATEGORY / TOPIC MAXIMUM HOURS**

Review the full text of regulation, **COMAR 10.28.02—Continuing Education Requirements**. There is a link on the Board's website. Listed below is a summary:

CE Prep and Delivery	12 Hours
Clinical Observation	6 Hours
CPR	3 Hours
Ethics	4 Hours
Journal/ Online CE with Post Test	20 Hours
Practice Management	4 Hour
Pro Bono Work	6 Hours
Published Papers	12 Hours

**Online Renewal 2011**

Online renewal in 2009 was a tremendous success and the Board envisions that the renewal in 2011 will be as successful and will run smoothly. One of the major changes will be with the posting of continuing education activities. The evaluation comments from last year's process indicated that licensees found the process to be labor intensive, cumbersome, tedious and tiresome. Therefore, the Board is no longer requiring the posting of continuing education activities. However, each licensee will sign a statement attesting to having acquired the requisite hours at the time of renewal. There will continue to be a 20% random audit and those selected to participate will be flagged upon logging into the system. These licensees will be required to submit documentation of completion of the required number of hours by submitting either their OE Tracker data and/or copies of certificates of participation.

**OE Tracker and Maryland Board Approved****Continuing Education**

Effective July 1, 2009, continuing education sponsors approved by the Board were required to submit their attendance rosters electronically to the Board for submission to ARBO so that licensee data can be entered into the OE Tracker system. OE Tracker, as you are aware, is the service of ARBO that allows licensed optometrists to have their continuing education maintained in one central location. Generally optometrists use their OE Tracker cards at COPE approved continuing education offerings. As the Board prepares for the 2011 online renewal process, licensees are required to record their OE Tracker numbers at all continuing education offerings whether COPE or Maryland Board approved. If you have not been using your OE Tracker number, the Board strongly recommends that you contact ARBO directly at (704) 970-2710 or visit them on the web at [www.arbo.org](http://www.arbo.org) to get information about securing and using the card. As approved sponsors submit their spreadsheets to the Board, staff forward these upload forms to ARBO. ARBO staff enter the attendance data for each program where a licensee has entered the requisite OE Tracker number.

F.Y.I.

**Due to extenuating circumstances, the Board is allowing licensees to apply any continuing education hours, taken between June 21, 2009 and June 30, 2009 and not previously applied to the 2009 renewal, toward meeting their CE requirement for license renewal in June 2011.**

**General Continuing Education Requirements**

Licenses for Maryland optometrists will expire on June 30, 2011. The following information summarizes Maryland's continuing education requirements for optometrists to renew their licenses. According to COMAR 10.28.02.06 (A), each optometrist is responsible for obtaining proof of hour credits and maintaining this documentation for inspection by the Board for 4 years after the date of renewal. Maryland requires up to 50 hours every two years. Hours taken must be within the time period July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2011.

**TPA Certified** optometrists are required to complete 50 hours and 30 of those hours must be in the use and management of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents. Current CPR certification is required.

**DPA Certified** optometrists are required to complete 36 hours and 6 of those hours must be in the use of diagnostic pharmaceutical agents. Current CPR certification is required.

**Non Certified** optometrists are required to complete 36 hours.

**The Board accepts continuing education programs that are either Maryland Board approved or COPE approved. Programs are categorized as either general or therapeutic. The following COPE codes are accepted as therapeutic: GL, PO, RS, AS, PS, NO, PH, PD, SD, OP.**

## QEI (Quality Enhancement and Improvement) Committee News

Jo Anne Brilliant, O.D., Chair

### 2011 CE Project

The QEI Committee is bringing back the Record Review Project that was first presented in 2003. This is an opportunity for you to actively participate in the same record review that we perform when records are requested by the Committee. You will gain insight into the procedure and obtain a better understanding of the goal of the Committee which is to elevate the standard of care in Maryland by making optometrists aware of current medical practices. For your efforts, you will be rewarded with 6 hours of CE. Take this opportunity to make sure your medical records meet the criteria and learn in the process. We hope you find this information useful and thank you for participating in this unique educational experience.

### RECORD REVIEW PROGRAM

Now that the planning for the Record Review Project is complete, the committee now turns its attention to the annual record review program. Licensees selected for the 2009 program have been identified and will receive a request for the submission of TPA Patient logs for therapeutic patients that were seen in calendar year 2009 from January through December.

### 2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP



**Senate Bill 145 (Sunset Extension and Program Evaluation)** was signed into law on May 4, 2010. This legislation extended the termination date of the State Board of Examiners in Optometry to July 1, 2023. The law requires that by October 1, 2011, the Board submit a report to the State legislature on the actions it has taken to monitor the decline in the new licenses issued and the trends in the renewal of previously issued licenses and include any recommendations made to address the findings; review future revenue and expenditure trends to determine if a fee increase may be necessary; and implement a biennial renewal cycle to maintain a more consistent fund balance. The Board has already addressed the issue of a biennial renewal cycle. Historically, all licenses expired and renewed in odd-numbered years. At its May 2010 meeting, the Board approved and instituted its first even-numbered year renewal. Licenses issued beginning in May 2010 will expire on June 30, 2012.

Bill Signing Photo - Seated, left to right, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown; Senate President, Thomas V. Mike Miller; Governor Martin O'Malley; House Speaker, Michael E. Busch; Standing - Patricia G. Bennett, Board Administrator; Dr. Thomas Azman, O.D. Board President; Dr. Stephen D. Kwan, O.D., Board Member & Legislative Liaison

### HB 144 Health Occupation Boards Revisions

The passage of HB 114 (Chapter 534)/ SB 291 (Chapter 533) requires several revisions to the Health Occupations Articles that impact all of the Health Occupations Boards. The law, which became effective July 1, 2010, sets standardized guidelines for all health occupations boards regarding the disciplinary process and sanctioning of licensees; requires boards to notify licensees of Board vacancies and directs that Board appointments shall reflect geographic, racial, ethnic, and cultural and gender diversity of the State; requires that the Boards collaboratively develop cultural competency training for new Board members; mandates that the Secretary of the Department confirm the appointment of each board Administrator or Executive and requires that Boards collect racial and ethnic information for applicants for licensure and license renewal. Additionally, Boards are required to post all final, public orders for disciplinary sanctions on their websites. The law also requires the Secretary of the Department to establish goals for the timeliness of complaint resolution for all of the Boards.



# The Consumer's Eye



Dr. Frederick J. Walsh, pictured left, and Kisha Fields Matthews serve as the Board's consumer members. From the onset, Dr. Walsh and Ms. Fields Matthews have been fully engaged in Board processes and have made invaluable contributions. They continuously provide feedback in Board discussions from the consumer's perspective. Over the past few months, the Board has been involved in dialogue about the importance of patient rights and what patients should expect when receiving eye care from licensed optometrists. Dr. Walsh spearheaded a project to develop a Patient Bill of Right and on November 17, 2010, the Board officially adopted the document. Enclosed with this mailing is a copy for licensees that can be displayed in practice locations and shared with patients and staff. It will also be posted on the Board's website.

## REHABILITATION COMMITTEE

According to Health Occupations Article §11-405 Optometrist rehabilitation committees, the Board is charged with evaluating and providing assistance to any optometrist in need of treatment and rehabilitation for alcoholism, drug abuse, chemical dependency, or other physical, emotional, or mental condition. In an effort to meet these requirements, the Board has formed a Rehabilitation Committee.

The function of the committee is to provide information on the Board's website where licensees can access information and resources for treatment and rehabilitation services should the need arise. The committee's goal is to empower licensees to seek appropriate services without the Board's intervention or involvement. Should a licensee require service, that information would remain confidential and therefore would not be shared with the committee or the Board.

There will be a link on the Board's website to information, resources and programs that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene operates, manages and connects to throughout the state.



## BOARD STATS

There are 879 active optometrists. Of that number, 740 are TPA certified, 83 are DPA certified, and 14 are licensed without certification. There are 309 licensees with inactive status. Since January 2010, the Board has issued original licenses to 52 optometrists.

## FORMAL ACTION VS. INFORMAL ACTION

Pursuant to Maryland Health Occ. Code Ann. ("HO") § 11-313 and Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") 10.28.04, the Board has the authority to take action against a licensee in disciplinary cases. The types of action that the Board may take are (1) formal disciplinary action and (2) informal action. The facts and circumstances of the cases determine the disciplinary process and resolution of each case.

Formal disciplinary action consists of Board orders, such as consent orders and final orders. Board orders resolve contested cases by consent or adjudication. They consist of findings of fact, conclusions of law and a sanction that may include reprimand, suspension, probation, revocation and/or a fine. These formal actions are subject to disclosure to the public under the Maryland Public Information Act.

Informal action consists of a Letter of Education or a Letter of Admonishment. These letters resolve disciplinary cases, which generally are less serious in nature. The letters are not subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act.

## CURRENT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

As required by law, the Board has posted on its website all final orders.

## DID YOU KNOW?



Pursuant to Maryland Health Occupations Code Ann. § 11-313(15), it is in violation of Maryland law if an optometrist "aids an unauthorized person in the practice of optometry." Therefore, the Board may take disciplinary action against a licensee who practices with or supervises an individual who is practicing optometry without a license. If an individual is practicing optometry with you, be sure to verify that that person is licensed with the Board, or you will be placing your own license in jeopardy!

### Maryland Board of Examiners in Optometry

4201 Patterson Avenue, Room 307

Baltimore, Maryland 21215-2299

Phone: 410-764-4710

Fax: 410-358-2906

optometry@ dhmh.state.md.us

www.dhmf.maryland.gov/optometry

### BOARD STAFF

Patricia G. Bennett, MSW, Administrator

Kecia Dunham, Licensing Coordinator

Delia Turano Schadt, AAG, Board Counsel

Dale Cranford, Board Investigator

Larry Schuyler, Board Investigator

### DOES THE BOARD DISCLOSE YOUR ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC?

**YES!** Under the Maryland Public Information Act ("PIA"), the public is granted access, or can be denied access, to records of all kinds, and of all units of State government, including the health occupation boards. The basic mandate of the PIA is to enable people to have access to government records without unnecessary cost or delay. The general rule favors the public's right to information. In order for the Board to deny inspection of records, the materials must fall within a statutory exception.

Please be advised that a licensee may NOT have his/her contact information with the Board (**business telephone number and business address, or home address if the business address is not available**) kept private. If requested by a member of the public, the Board **must disclose** this information. In addition, under the statute, the Board must disclose, upon request, a licensee's **educational and occupational background, professional qualifications and orders resulting from formal disciplinary actions**.

If the Board only has one address of record for you, it will disclose it upon request. Therefore, please notify the Board as to which address you would like for the Board to disclose to the public and make certain that the Board has the address on record.

Board Regulation, COMAR 10.28.03.08, requires that an optometrist report a change of address within 30 days of beginning a practice in a new location. Please complete and mail or fax the following as required:

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTIFICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ License # \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

Current Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

New Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

Effective date of change: \_\_\_\_\_

Optometrist Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Maryland Board of Examiners in Optometry  
4201 Patterson Avenue, Room 307  
Baltimore, MD 21215-2299

Fax to: (410) 358-2906